RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 5th May, 1995/15th Vaisakha, 1917 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

OBITUARY REFERENCE

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I refer with profound sorrow to the passing away of Shri N. R. Muniswamy, former Member of Rajya Sabha on the 2nd May, 1995 at the age of 87. Shri N.R. Muniswamy was born in June, 1908 at Nawalpur in North Arcot District of Tamil Nadu and had his higher education at Layola College and Law College, Madras. An advocate by profession, he was closely associated with social and welfare organisations in various capacities and worked tirelessly to ameliorate the conditions of the Backward Classes.

Shri N. R. Muniswamy was a Member of the first and second Lok Sabha from 1952 to 1962. Thereafter, he was a Member of Rajya Sabha, representing the State of Tamil Nadu, from April, 1966 to April, 1972. He was also a member of the Public Accounts Committee from 1957 to 1959 and from 1968 to 1970. We deeply mourn the passing away of Shri N. R. Muniswamy. I request Members to rise in their places and observe silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed soul.

(Hon. Members then stood in silence for one minute)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Secretary-General will convey to the members of the bereaved family our deep sense of sorrow and sympathy.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Consumption of Kesari Dal

*441. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:

SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received reports that consumption of Kesari dal is harmful for the human beings;

(b) what is the total production of kesari dal in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal during the past one year State-wise;

(c) whether the Central Government propose to direct State Governments to ban production of this harmful pulse; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Statement is laid on the table of the Sabha. (*See* below).

(c) and (d) No such proposal is under consideration. However, Ministry requested the Chief Ministers of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal to impose ban on cultivation/marketing of Kesari Dal during 1989. Subsequently in 1992 Ministry again requested the Chief Ministers of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal to ban Kesari Dal under Rule 44-A of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Rule, 1955

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†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Krishna Kumar Birla.

Statement

State-wise Production of Kesari Dal in 1993-94

	State	Production ('000 Tonnes)
1.	Bihar	184.4
2.	Madhya Pradesh	332.5
3.	Maharashtra	16.9
4.	West Bengal	40.1
	Total	573.9

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Sir, Kesari dal is grown fairly extensively in certain States of India particularly in Madhya Pradesh, West Benagl and Bihar. Kesari dal contains a substance called B-N-Ozalyl-Aminoalanint (BOA A). Sir, it is believed that this substance could cause a disease called Lathyrism which affects a person's nerves leading to paralysis. Though committees have been appointed in the past to settle the question as to whether Kesari dal is a harmful item of consumption, no definite conclusion has been reached as yet. The majority opinion, however, is that Kesari dal could cause Lathyrism. Sir, in 1961, all the States and Union Territories imposed a ban under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act on the sale of Kesari dal barring Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar. There is no provision in the Act to ban its cultivation. This dal has been banned in Nepal and Bangladesh also. Some experts feel that Kesari dal taken in small quantities is not harmful. However, the Ministry of Health feels rightly in my opinion, that Kesari dal taken in higher quantities can damage the nervous system. What guarantee is there that Kesari dal taken in small quantities over a period of time would not damage the nervous system? There are alternate crops like Bengalgram, Lentil, etc. which are good for health and do not affect the nervous system.

Sir, my first question consists of three parts:

(a) Would the Government consider appointing a high-powered committee as recommended by the Standing Committee of Parliament on Agriculture to come to some sort of definite conclusion as to whether or not Kesari dal is harmful?

(b) As the majority opinion is that Kesari dal is harmful and could cause paralysis, would the Government consider modifying the Food Adulteration Act so as to ban its cultivation?

(c) Would the Government consider launching a kind of awareness campaign to dissuade people from consuming Kesari dal as the majority view is that Kesari dal is harmful for human consumption?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): Sir, the point made by the hon. Member is entirely correct. Kesari dal when used over a sustained period of time in large quantities would result in lathyrism and paralysis in humans. The Government of India have banned through the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act as early as in 1961 the distribution and sale of Kesari Dal. This pulse is cultivated basical-

ly in four States, i.e. Maharashtra, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Maharashtra, on the advice of the Government of India, banned in 1992 itself the sale of Kesari Dal. As regards the other States, the Ministry of Agriculture has been trying to persuade them to issue notifications under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act by which the sale can be stopped in those States.

The Committee of Parliament had made several recommendations and on that basis, as the hon. Member Mentioned, a high powered committee has already been constituted to determine finally and conclusively the deleterious effects of Kesari dal on human health The Committee has also recommended the widespread dissemination of information on how to wash and cook this Dal to reduce the ill-effects of the particular neuro-toxin. We have also pursued research to reduce the toxin contained in the newer varieties developed by our Institutes such as the Indira Gandhi Research Institute in Raipur. They reduced the content of the toxin to below threshold level, i.e., about 0.2 per cent. The Government is ware of this problem. This cannot be....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Probably there are other supplementaries also. You may kindly be brief, otherwise you will have to repeat the answer....

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR: Sir, the research on the disease is being handled by the Health Ministry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The second supplementary, please.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Sir, my second supplementary has been answered by the hon. Minister, probably in anticipation of the question. However, I put this question for a more specific answer. Is it a fact that a team of scientists headed by Dr. S. L. Mehta, Head of the Department of Biochemistry at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi has been able to make a breakthrough in deevloping Kesari dal with zero BOAA which would not cause any disease?

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR: Sir, the research in this area is in progress. We are not able to say that this claim can be accepted. This is a process; they have reduced it. The findings are there and we are evaluating the findings.

श्री आनन्तराम जयसवाल : सभापति महोदय, जहां तक केसरी दाल का सवाल है, उसके बारे में साइंटिस्टों की अलग-अलग राय है और दोनों में इतना एकतिलाफ है कि इनमें किसी तरह का मेल नहीं हो सकता। लेकिन डा० कोठारी का जोरदार ढंग से यह कहना है कि इस दाल में प्रोटीन के कैन्टन्ट बहुत हैं और इससे किसी तरह का नुकसान नहीं होता। तो इस पर मिनिस्ट्री का क्या कहना है ? मिनिस्ट्री का इस पर क्या रीएक्शन है ? यह मेरा प्रश्न ए है और बी यह है कि इस सवाल को स्टेंडिंग कमेटी आफ एग्रीकल्चर ने भी एक्जामिन किया है। मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या उसकी कोई रिपोर्ट आपके पास आयी है और यदि आयी है तो उनकी डिटेल्स क्या है।

श्री बलराम जाखड़ : सभापति महोदय, कोठारी कई बार मुझे मिले और उन्होंने रिप्रजेन्टेशन भी बहुत बार दिए। लेकिन यह मनुष्य के जीवन-मरण का प्रश्न है। इसलिए इस बारे में एक आदमी के कहने से उस बात को कबूल नहीं किया जा सकता है। हम कभी भी यह नही चाहेंगे कि हमारी गलती से किसी भी प्राणी को कोई नुकसान हो। ऐतिहातन के तौर पर हर कदम फूंक-फूंक कर रखा जाता है। जब साधन ठीक हो जाएगा, जब यह साबित हो जाएगा कि इसमें कोई गड़बड़ नहीं है तब इसको करेंगे। हम इस चेष्टा में हैं कि जितनी जल्दी से जल्दी हो सके यह हो। इस के लिए कमेटी भी बनी है। डा० मेहता आई० ए० आर० आई० एक्सपर्ट की भी राय ली है। इसमें सब कुछ हो रहा है। दयाल कमेटी भी बनी है। मि० बोसेस भी प्रधान रहे हैं। उनका हम पूरा अन्वेषण करके सही तरीके से काम लेना चाहते हैं, जिससे किसी को कोई नुकसान न हो।

श्री अन नराम जायसवाल : मेरा दूसरा सवाल था कि स्टेंडिंग कमेटी आफ एग्रीकल्चर जिसने इस सवाल पर गौर किया, क्या उसने अपनी रिपोर्ट दी है, अपनी

रिपोर्ट सब्मिट की है ? यदि की है तो उसके कन्टेन्ट क्या है ?

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR: Sir, the Committee has already submitted a report on kesari dal. It is the 13th Report of the Committee. It is on the recommendation of the Committee that a high-powered committee with the representatives of all the relevant agencies, has already been appointed. I had already mentioned in the first answer the basic recommendations of the Committee and these recommendations are being implemented by the Government.

SHRI SOM PAL: Sir, on the point concerning this controversial subject, as the hon. Minister has rightly put it, there is a strong difference of opinion among various scientists. There has been a serious attempt in the ICAR and other laboratories also to reduce the toxic content and there has been some breakthrough also. So, Sir, almost all the points have been touched. Therefore, I do not wish to ask any more question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is the result of the first comprehensive answer.

श्री गोविंद राम मिरी : सभापति महोदय यह जो आंकड़े दिए गए हैं, इसमें सर्वाधिक उत्पादन केसरी दाल का मध्य प्रदेश में बताया गया है और खासकर के छत्तीसगढ़ में गरीबों के लिए यह सबसे सस्ती और सर्वसुलभ दाल है । इस दाल के उत्पादन के लिए अलग से पानी और खाद की जरूरत नहीं पड़ती है । ऐसा लगता है कि कुछ निहितस्वार्थी तत्वों द्वारा गरीबों का भोजन छीनने के लिए इसको विषैल बताया गया है, जैसा कि अभी माननीय मंत्री जी ने कहा है । मैं यह जानना चहता हूं कि यदि यह हानिकर है तो क्या शासन ने उचित दर पर गरीबों के लिए कोई अन्य दाल देने के विकल्प की व्यस्था की है और खास कर छत्तीसगढ में इससे होने वाली बीमारी के संबंध में कोई सर्वे किया है यदि किया है तो कितने लोगों को इससे एफेक्टेट बताया गया है, इसका स्पष्ट उत्तर मंत्री जी देने का कष्ट करें ?

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR: Sir, on behalf of the Government I would like to categorically reject the hon. Member's permise. It has been proved that the sustained use of Kesari dal can lead to paralysis. There is a different body of opinion. This is a residual crop, moisture-based residual crop in the paddy fields in three States and non-irrigated areas in Madhya Pradesh Substantial quantities were being produced, but now the area under cultivation has come down from about 10 lakh hectares in 1991 to 5 lakh hectares in 1993. One reason for this is, as irrigation expands, other high-value crops are being cultivated by the agriculturists. The Government of India is continuing with its campaign for alternative crops. There are differing opinions of scientific bodies and also pressure of vested interests for not banning it, for continuing it, because it is used not only for human consumption but is perceived to be used for adulteration of other pulses. Therefore, the problem has to be tackled . As the research continues the Government of India will continue its efforts in a multi-pronged manner to reduce the area of cultivation, promote alternative crops and also replace the income of the farmer through other methods. This is the process we are engaged in.

SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Has there been any research and survey regarding the disease? (*Interruptions*). Sir, the second part of my question has not been answered.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is Madhya Pradesh also included in the scientific research?

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR: Madhya Pradesh is included particularly. Research and survey is going on not only on the disease but also on the toxicity of the pulse. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Sir, I may add one thing. It is a very sturdy plant which can grow at a low moisture. That is why it is being cultivated. We want to derive that benefit. That gene has to be injected into something which

will give us a sturdy plant which can replace it, but without this toxin.... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Has a survey been conducted about the disease?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has said that the area has been included ... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM: question is different. Have you made any survey regarding the disease?

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR: A large number of surveys have been conducted on the disease. Research is going on ...(*Interruptions*).. under the auspices of the Indian Council of Medical Research. It is a highly researched disease. And as per the current scientific knowledge, the continued and sustained use of this pulse over the threshold level can result in neurological diseases and paralysis.

श्री मूलचन्द मीणा: सभापति महोदय, मंत्री जी के जवाब से ऐसा लगता है कि इनके जवाब में कंटोवर्सी है । मंत्री जी ने एक तरफ डा. कोठारी ..(**व्यवधान**)..

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम: दोनों मंत्रियों ने जो जवाब दिया है, क्या उसमें कंट्रोवर्सी है ? ..(**व्यवधान**)..

श्री मूलचन्द मीणा: चाहे कृषि मंत्री जी जाखड़ जी ने जवाब दिया है या जो राज्य मंत्री जी ने जवाब दिया है, मंत्री जी ने जो जवाब दिया है कि डा० कोठारी रिपोर्ट के अनुसार केसरी दाल में किसी प्रकार का विषाक्त तत्व नहीं है । दो कमेटियां आपने बनाई थी दयाल कमेटी और मेहता कमेटी । उनकी रिपोर्ट में यह है कि इस दाल के अन्दर विषाक्त तत्व है । मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि जब सरकार ने 1992 के अन्दर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया तो यह तीन साल हो गये उस प्रतिबंध को महाराष्ट्र सरकार और जो दूसरी राज्य सरकारें हैं उन्होंने क्यों नहीं लगाया । आपके विभाग ने क्या क्या कार्यवाही की है उन राज्य सरकारों से प्रतिबंध लगाने के लिए, इसकी विशेष रिपोर्ट बताए । दूसरा मैं यह पूछना चाहूंगा कि विषाक्त तत्व को दूर करने के लिए इस दाल में से जो जहरीला तत्व है उसको दूर करने के लिए आज तक विभिन्न कमेटियों की क्या रिपोर्ट विभाग को मिली है आपने उस रिपोर्ट के ऊपर क्या कार्यवाही की है क्या उस विषाक्त तत्व को निकाल कर इस दाल को भोजन में उपयोग में लाने लायक बना दिया लिया गया है ?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. The Minister has answered this point actually. You are repeating it. Mr. Minister, do you want to say anything very concisely?

श्री मूलचन्द मीणा: मैंने यह पूछा है कि डा. कोठारी की रिपोर्ट....

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has said that there are some reports. It has been said already.

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR: Sir, there is no controversy as such. There are always differing scientific opinion on any subject. As of now, there is no reason for lifting the ban imposed by the Government of India in 1961. The State Governments are being persuaded. There are different opinions of different bodies and there are vested interests in continuing the cultivation. The farmers are saying that they are cultivating it to feed the bulls. So, there are difficulties in implementing the ban. That is one reason why the State Governments are not implementing it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Ashok Mitra. Please make it a short one.

SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Sir, doesn't the problem lie elsewhere? At the time of Independence we were producing only nine to ten million tonnes of pulses in the country. Now, after nearly half a century, the production has merely inched up to 13 or 14 million tonnes, roughly a 40 per cent increase, whereas our population has gone up by samething like 150 per cent. There is an overall shortage. The per capita availability of pulses has gone down, down, down. Sir,

even the poor do need some protein to survive. And in the circumstances, the prices of pulses have gone up. What can the poor do? And they go in search of this Kesari dal. So, when the Minister mentions about vested interests, now I would be very chary to consider the demand for survival of a human being as a vested interest. So, the problem lies in really increasing the aggregate production of pulses and this is something one should look into, why after 40 years of planned effort we have not been able to increase the production of pulses.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is a question we have to release and see what we have achieved in fifty years. It has been a saga of successes, the production going up from 50 million tonnes to 186.4 million tonnes. I know that there is deficiency as far as the pulses are concerned, but that also has not been stagnant. That has been going up. But what has been going up is our population You do not control it, That is the problem and with that, throughout the world....(Interruptions).... Just listen to me. Throughout the world there are deficiencies as far as the pulses are concerned. There is a shortage of pulses. We are trying to do away with it and we will do it because our scientists are competent. This is a rain-fed crop, most susceptible to diseases and whims of nature. That is why the farmers do not take up. We are trying to boost the farmers and give incentives to them so that they can produce more and we are on the job and we will do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q. No. 442.

Q. No. 442 (The questioner (Shri *Bhupinder Singh Mann*), *was absent. for answer, vide Col.....infra.*]

केन्द्रीय विद्यालयों में संस्कृत पढ़ाया जाना

*443. **श्री शिव प्रसाद चनपुरिया :** क्या **मानव संसाधन विकास** मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि केन्द्रीय विद्यालयों में संस्कृत नवीं कक्षा तक ही पढाई जा रही है जबकि अन्य विद्यालयों में इसे दसवीं कक्षा तक पढाया जा रहा है ;

(ख) क्या यह भी सच है कि संस्कृत भाषा के शिक्षकों की कमी के कारण दसवीं कक्षा तक संस्कृत नही पढाई जा रही है, यदि हां, तो संस्कृत शिक्षकों की नियुक्ति में क्या बाधाएं हैं, और

(ग) सरकार केन्द्रीय विद्यालयों में दसवीं कक्षा तक संस्कृत पढाए जाने के लिए क्या कदम उठाने का विचार रखती है ?

मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री (श्री माधवराव सिंधिया) : (क) और (ख) संस्कृत को सभी केन्द्रीय विद्यालयों में कक्षा V से कक्षा IX तक तीसरी भाषा के रूप में अनिवार्य रूप से पढाया जाता है। केन्द्रीय विद्यालयो के छात्र समुदाय की संरचना को विचार में रखकर केन्द्रीय विद्यालय संगठन ने यह निर्धारित किया है कि केन्द्रीय विद्यालय के प्रत्येक छात्र को बोर्ड में कक्षा X में दो भाषाओं के रूप में हिंदी और अंग्रेजी को अवश्य लेना चाहिए।

(ग) छात्र बोर्ड में कक्षा X में संस्कृत को भी एक अतिरिक्त वैकल्पिक विषय के रूप में ले सकते हैं।

श्री शिव प्रसाद चनपुरिया : सभापति महोदय, मंत्री जी ने मेरे प्रश्न के उत्तर में यह कहा है कि,

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तो मैं मंत्री जी से यह पूछना चाहता हूं कि पिछले तीन सत्रों में कितने-कितने छात्रों ने दसवीं कक्षा में संस्कृत भाषा को वैकल्पिक विषय के रूप में लिया है ?

मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय (शिक्षा और संस्कृति विभाग) में उपमंत्री (कुमारी शैलजा) : सर, करीबन 100 विद्यार्थियों ने, 112 स्टूडेंट्स ने यह एडीशनल ओपशनल सब्जैक्ट के रूप में संस्कृत को लिया था।